



dandelion.com

© 2008 [AGI-Information Management Consultants](#)  
May be used for personal purposes only or by  
libraries associated to [dandelion.com](#) network.

---

# The World of Goods

---

## Towards an Anthropology of Consumption

With a new introduction  
Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood



London and New York

---

# Contents

---

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Preface                      | vii |
| Acknowledgments              | xvi |
| Introduction to 1996 edition | xx  |

## Part I Goods as an information system

|   |  |    |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | Why people want goods                          | 3  |
|   | <i>Silence in utility theory</i>               | 3  |
|   | <i>Self-criticism of economists</i>            | 6  |
| 2 | Why they save                                  | 11 |
|   | <i>According to Keynes</i>                     | 11 |
|   | <i>According to Weber</i>                      | 13 |
|   | <i>The group environment</i>                   | 20 |
|   | <i>The individualist environment</i>           | 21 |
|   | <i>Emulation according Duesenberry</i>         | 26 |
|   | <i>Prudence according to Friedman</i>          | 29 |
|   | <i>Normative consumption</i>                   | 34 |
| 3 | The uses of goods                              | 36 |
|   | <i>Redefining consumption</i>                  | 36 |
|   | <i>A universe constructed from commodities</i> | 38 |
|   | <i>Theoretical individualism</i>               | 41 |
|   | <i>Fixing public meanings</i>                  | 43 |
| 4 | Exclusion, intrusion                           | 48 |
|   | <i>Goods as material culture</i>               | 48 |
|   | <i>Marking services</i>                        | 50 |
|   | <i>Problems of synthesis</i>                   | 52 |
|   | <i>Strategies of intrusion</i>                 | 56 |

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <i>Kinship and marriage</i>                                | 59  |
| <i>Social conditions for rational behavior</i>             | 63  |
| 5 The technology of consumption                            | 67  |
| <i>Composite commodities</i>                               | 67  |
| <i>New commodities</i>                                     | 69  |
| <i>Spread-of-infection model</i>                           | 71  |
| <i>Order of acquisition</i>                                | 74  |
| <i>Personal availability</i>                               | 78  |
| 6 Consumption periodicities                                | 82  |
| <i>Ranking consumption events</i>                          | 82  |
| <i>Quality</i>   | 84  |
| <i>Periodicity as a principle in the division of labor</i> | 86  |
| <i>Consuming level</i>                                     | 90  |
| <br><b>Part II Implications for social policy</b>          |     |
| 7 Separate economic spheres in ethnography                 | 95  |
| <i>Economic spheres</i>                                    | 95  |
| <i>Scale of consumption</i>                                | 99  |
| <i>Refusal to transact</i>                                 | 100 |
| <i>Restricted circulation</i>                              | 103 |
| <i>Control over the economy</i>                            | 104 |
| 8 International comparisons                                | 107 |
| <i>Separable demand for goods</i>                          | 107 |
| <i>Poor individuals and poor countries</i>                 | 111 |
| <i>The gap</i>   | 114 |
| <i>Less developed consumption</i>                          | 115 |
| <i>Linkage</i>   | 118 |
| <i>Consumer technological linkage</i>                      | 121 |
| <i>Consumer social linkage</i>                             | 123 |
| <i>Consumer information linkage</i>                        | 126 |
| 9 Consumption classes                                      | 131 |
| <i>Grouping</i>  | 131 |
| <i>Admission to the top class</i>                          | 134 |
| <i>Linkage tests</i>                                       | 137 |
| <i>Time</i>  | 144 |
| 10 Control of value  | 147 |
| Notes  | 155 |
| Index  | 165 |